

Executive Discussion/Animas River Coordination Meeting

- Participants: Shelly Shafer (Disaster Program Manager CECO), Joe Koester (CECW-CE), Sandy Zebrowski (EMCX), Greg Jordan (Environmental Division), Kelly Koontz (Environmental Division), John Daley (IIS), Gene Pawlik (PAO), Jesse Hogan (Levee Safety), Rick Olsen (CW Geotech), Candi Walters (PAO), Mark Cohen (Environmental Division), Doug Warnock (Environmental Division), Mark Roupas (CECO), Frank Randon (Disaster Program Manager CECO)
- Recommended potential participants of independent study:
 - Department of Interior:
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Office of Surface Mining
 - US Geological Survey
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - USACE
 - Mine Safety and Health Administration
 - FEMA
 - EPA
 - US Coast Guard
 - State Regulatory Agencies (CO, TX, NM, UT)
 - Navajo Nation (and other tribal interests)
 - Academia (as may be necessary for discrete support)
 - Professional Organizations (e.g. American Society of Civil Engineers, American Society of Mechanical Engineers) (as may be necessary for discrete support)
 - Mine owner, operator and other potentially responsible parties
- Recommended agency lead is Department of Interior
 - Justification: Many of the above participants are within DOI. DOI lacks close partnerships with EPA, they may be seen as more independent.
- Recommended expertise (as the study progresses this list may change)
 - Hydrologists
 - Geologists
 - Chemists
 - Geotechnical Engineers
 - Mine Safety Specialists
 - Tunneling experts
 - Risk Assessors
 - Construction Management
 - Public Affairs
- Contents of independent study
 - Independent investigation of Gold King Mine release
 - Identify investigation participants

- Root cause analysis of release
 - Analysis of government oversight of contractor activities
 - Contracting qualifications – specs, contract clauses
 - Dig plan - techniques
 - Outreach plan
 - Historical review of similar mining accidents/catastrophic releases
 - Historical review of the mining work (and mine closing) at this location
- Outcomes of an independent study
 - Best practices/SOPs to mitigate future releases
 - Failure analysis
 - Contributing causes
 - Procedural mistakes
 - Oversight qualifications
 - How to mitigate ongoing seepage
 - How to move from short term mitigation measures to longer term solutions
- Authority and Funding
 - EPA would need to fund agencies directly for their participation
 - There is an existing USACE-EPA MOA that may provide the authority and funding mechanism.
- Issues to be considered with the independent study
 - Though DOI is recommended as lead, the USACE has the program and project management experience, technical expertise, and the technology to lead such a study.
 - With a catastrophic release, the quick collection of perishable data (site visit, collection of data and interviews) is imperative for a successful and complete investigation. Due to delay, clear success in an investigation is lessened.
 - Potential for an increase to the scope of study: post event actions (e.g. notifications, immediate site investigation, remediation)
 - Determining protocol and methodology for an investigation
 - Will EPA share data or will the study/investigation occur separately
 - A large multi-agency effort has its risks. There should be a clear objective, a target completion date, and a leadership mandate to move the study and/or investigation as needed.
 - Despite other agency involvement, EPA would need to remain the federal lead in distributing information related to the spill
 - Counsel will need to confirm that existing MOA/interagency agreements and funding mechanisms can be utilized for this study/investigation.